

## 2018 HELENA OPEN LANDS WORK PLAN

PRINCIPAL GOAL OF THE HELENA OPEN LANDS MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (HOLMAC) WORK PLAN: To outline land management activities scheduled for implementation in the next 12 months. The work plan will be updated annually to address land management needs that have emerged as a result of input from the citizens of Helena, HOLMAC, and/or city staff. In accordance with the goals and objectives defined within the Helena Open Lands Management Plan, land stewardship activities shall be designed and implemented in a manner that will preserve, restore, and enhance the natural character of Helena's open lands and provide Helenans with accessible natural open lands.

### **TRAILS AND RECREATION MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES:**

#### ***Purchased Trail Construction, Maintenance, and Coordination Services***

**Trail Construction** – All new trail construction routes are subject to verbal approval by the City of Helena Parks Department liaison prior to the initiation of trail construction activities. Contractor shall identify trail construction routes with pin flags and/or ribbons situated within four feet of the intended construction route.

- Mount Ascension Trail (Easy Ride to Prickly Pear): construct a trail 24 inches wide of native material between the Easy Rider trail and Prickly Pear trail along a route designated by City staff with ribbons and pin flags. Woody vegetation located within 36 inches of the centerline (clearance limits) of the designated trail construction route will be severed at ground level and removed from the clearance limits of the trail route by City staff within 10 days of receiving a verbal request to complete said clearing work from Contractor.
- Bull Run Trail (Gold Rush Avenue to South California Street): construct a trail 36 inches wide of native material along a route designated by City staff with ribbons and pin flags.

#### **Trail Improvement**

- Entertainment:
  - A. *Alternate Section*: Widen Corridor and flatten tread, build up drainage features near bottom of alternate.
  - B. *Jeep Trail Section*: Install erosion controls (check dams and drainage features) on fall-line jeep trail section. Erosion and speed controls (grade reversals where possible,

check-dams in entrenched areas) spot flattening sections and in-sloping turns, building up small berms for safety.

C. *Lower Section*: Realign/lengthen turns and build up berms.

- Mt. Ascension Loop Trail: Widen corridor and flatten tread.

#### **Adopt-A-Trail Volunteer Program**

- Proactively engage individuals and groups for participation.
- Produce an annual activity report for the Adopt-A-Trail program and deliver the completed report to the City of Helena

#### **Mapping**

- South Hills Trail map update: Provide GPS data to City including trail re-routes and/or new tails, improved trails, parking areas, etc.

#### **Miscellaneous Tasks**

- Coordinate volunteer activities (Workdays, Boy Scouts, Corporate and NGO's, Weed Pull events, etc.)
- Complete trail user counts, using electronic tally devices, at the following three trailheads: Top of Mt. Ascension (2006), Diehl Drive (Rocky Road), and Lime Kiln (Prickly Pear Trail & Rocky Road-Winnie Water Tank Access Road) . Compile collected data and deliver an annual report (Trail Counter Report) that includes chronological line charts depicting monthly use organized by type (foot, bicycle), and trailhead. The delivered report shall include a narrative for each collection point that outlines methodology, assumptions and any data irregularities that may have been noted.

**Safety** - Safety is a prime concern, and the contractor shall conduct the contract work in a safe manner and shall comply with all laws, rules, and regulations relating to the safety of persons and property. The Contractor accepts responsibility to prevent accidents to its employees and supervised volunteers engaged upon or in vicinity of the project area. The Contractor shall be solely responsible for the protection and safety of its employees and supervised volunteers and for daily inspection of the work area and safety equipment. It is important that Contractors employees and supervised volunteers receive the proper safety training. The Montana Safety Culture Act (39-71-1501 to 39-71-1508 MCA) requires that employees and supervised volunteers receive appropriate employee safety orientation, job specific safety training and periodic refresher training. As a guideline, orientations should include the following items:

- Safety and operational instruction specific to the equipment they will be utilizing
- Where the supervised volunteer can find a copy of the Contractors safety policy
- The safety expectations of the Contractor
- The supervisory chain of command
- How to report accidents or unsafe conditions
- Emergency Plans and procedures that may apply

### ***Volunteer Trail Construction Activities***

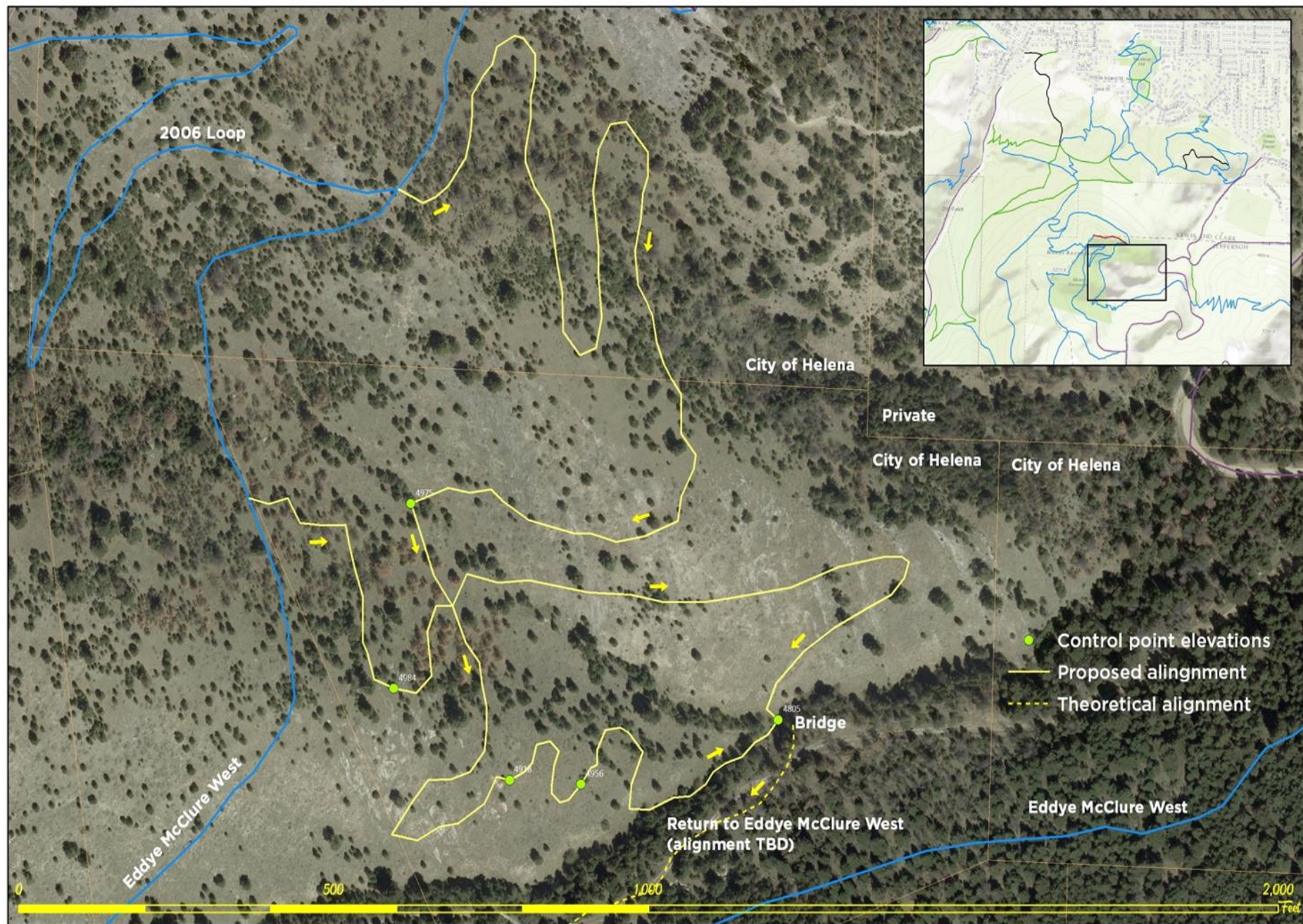
#### **Mount Ascension Directional Trail Construction Project**

- Montana Bicycle Guild (MBG) proposes to construct 2-3 new mountain bike trails on the southeast face of Mount Ascension between Eddy McClure West and Arrowroot Drive. These trails will be directional, with no uphill travel. Right of way conventions in this zone will require the downhill user to yield to the one above. Trail design will reflect the mountain biking preferred use, and provide a recreational experience currently lacking in the South Hills.

Trails will be constructed to current best practice, with the goal of reducing routine maintenance needs. Drainage will be accommodated by design with rolling dips and outsoles. The trails will have isolated steep pitches, but overall grades will be lower than commonly found in the South Hills, to reduce the amount of braking. Grade reversals will be used to create speed checks where possible, reducing braking bumps. Individual trail features will range in difficulty from beginner to expert, although ride-around options will allow each trail to be ridden by all abilities, encouraging skills progression and family rides. The trails are designed as a loop, thus reducing the incentive for foot traffic to use them as a shortcut between Mount Ascension and Eddy McClure East.

This area is well-suited for this use, as there are no current social trail crossings, and uphill access from the bottom is limited to a single point (a wooden bridge constructed for fuel reduction access) to which warning signs will be affixed. Mountain biking's popularity continues to grow on Helena Open Lands. Mountain bikers constitute a broad spectrum of age, ability, and interest, and these trails will be designed for provide a pleasant experience for all riders, from tentative beginners to advanced riders who enjoy speed and technical challenges. Since the latter are the users most likely to generate friction with other users of HOL trails, an area dedicated for bike trails will attract that use from other areas and reduce the potential for mishap or conflict. It will also be a popular development with Helena riders, and a major amenity to our trail system. **(See attached map – Figure 1 for details)**





**Figure 1:** Planned trails on the southeast side of Mount Ascension

## ***Helena Parks Department***

- Complete monthly inspections of entire trail system and associated wayfinding signage.
- Construct trail signs and install/replace as needed.
- Respond to trail issues throughout the year as needs arise.
- Continue to implement the social trail management recommendations provided by HOLMAC.

## **FACILITIES:**

### **Trailheads**

- Complete Beattie Trailhead expansion project.
- Complete the installation of a trailhead entrance sign, and kiosk at the Beattie Street Trailhead parking area. Purchase a vaulted restroom facility and coordinate all installation related activities.
- Surface the entrance road and parking area at the Park City (Mount Helena Ridge) Trailhead, install parking barriers, and oversee the installation of a vaulted restroom facility.
- Expand the Lower Davis Street and Limekiln parking areas.
- Complete the Waterline Extension Trail parking area.
- Construct and install kiosks at the Mount Helena and Saddle Drive trailhead parking areas.

## **FOREST MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES:**

### **D.N.R.C. – Community Forest Western Bark Beetle and Mt. Ascension Fuel Reduction Grants**

- Complete 30 acres of slash pile burning, process final reimbursement request and associated project close-out documents.

### **D.N.R.C. - Mt. Ascension Forest Fuels Reduction Project**

- Prepare and complete approximately 35 acres of forest fuel treatment work within Mt. Ascension Natural Park.

**D.N.R.C. – Mount Helena Fuels Reduction**

- Prepare and complete approximately 60 acres of forest fuel treatment work on the north face of Mount Helena.

**U.S.F.S. – Participating Agreement (Capital 360)**

- Prepare and complete approximately 60 acres of forest fuel and hazard tree treatment work on U.S.F.S. ownership in Grizzly Gulch.
- Prepare and complete approximately 220 acres of forestry maintenance work within the Open Lands system.

**Forest Fuel Treatment Grants**

- Complete applications as opportunities arise.

**Forestry Visuals**

- Remove retention tree and boundary identification flagging from all forestry projects completed to date.
- Respond to trash dumping and abandoned transient camps as needed.

**Forestry Education**

- Participate in community forestry outreach efforts as opportunities arise.

**Firewood Distribution**

- Harvest, forward, and process approximately 100 cords of firewood material for clients of the Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP)
- Assist in the organization of volunteers involved in the splitting and distribution of accumulated firewood material during the January 1, 2018 to December 31, 2018 timeframe.

**PROPERTY ACQUISITION/EXCHANGE:****Property Acquisition**

- Assist in the completion of property acquisition grant applications as opportunities become available.
- Respond to public and partnership requests regarding potential purchase/sale/exchange of open lands properties.

## **WEED MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES:**

### **Subcommittee/Code Enforcement Officer**

- Participate in insects collections for Dalmatian Toadflax, Leafy Spurge, and Spotted Knapweed coordinated by the state bio control coordinator.
- Assist in monitoring of insect release sites for potential collection.
- Mark an additional 10-15 past release sites.
- Update insect release map and include newly marked sites.
- Target fuel reduction units for potential weed treatment.

### **Public Education**

- Coordinate groups for weed pulls throughout the summer. (PPLT Weed Social).
- Make/share weed education/identification videos to webpage/Facebook.

### **Noxious Weed Treatment**

- Use herbicide to treat 2018 selected target areas (approx. 200 acres).
- Participate in insects collections for Leafy Spurge and Spotted Knapweed coordinated by the state bio control coordinator.
- Learn bio control monitoring techniques and processes through training offered by state bio control coordinator.
- Schedule and participate in weed pulls on open lands.
- Administer MDA 2017-019 Noxious Weed Trust Fund Grant.

## **FENCE CONSTRUCTION & REMOVAL:**

- Install post and rail fencing on the north and south sides of Arrowroot road near the top of Mt. Ascension to prevent vehicular entrance.
- Identify sections of dysfunctional wire fence occurring upon City of Helena open lands properties and schedule removal.



**BOUNDARY IDENTIFICATION:**

- Verify open lands boundaries as budgets allow. Prioritize open lands boundary identification needs according to program of work and emerging management issues.
- Install boundary identification posts at approximate 50 foot intervals where encroachment situations are identified.

**RECLAMATION:**

- Utilize a grass seed mixture containing one or more of the following native grasses: Slender wheatgrass (*Elymus trachycaulus* ssp. *trachycaulus*), Idaho fescue (*Festuca idahoensis* variety Joeseeph or Nez Perce), Bluebunch wheatgrass (*Agropyron spicatum* or *Pseudoroegenaria spicata* var Goldar)
- Monitor previously seeded areas.